

Continued Presence of Older Service Commercial Areas

Downtown Belmont also serves a vital role in providing for the service commercial needs of the community and the traveling public. A necessary element of land use planning in downtown is to recognize this role, and continue the presence of service commercial and auto-dependent uses, particularly along the major roadway corridors of Ralston Avenue and El Camino Real. The existing character of the service commercial district on the east side of the El Camino Real corridor should be maintained, while encouraging modest growth and an improved visual appearance.

Conserving Residential Neighborhoods

Traditionally, the City of Belmont has provided for approximately 6% of the housing needs of the southern and central portions of San Mateo County. Existing single family and multi-family residential neighborhoods, which ring the outer perimeter of the Downtown Planning Area, play a vital role in supplying housing for this ever-expanding population. It is important that these neighborhoods be preserved within the downtown. Additionally, as traffic congestion continues to be a major influence on the quality of life throughout the Bay Area, opportunities for providing housing within walking distance from the work place, shopping districts, and providers of community services should be encouraged. Mixed use projects, which combine ground floor commercial use with second and third floor residential uses are an excellent technique to accomplish this goal without forfeiting retail sales potential. Mixed use projects also have the potential to energize the downtown environment, interjecting people into an area which may otherwise lack activity during non-working hours.

Maintaining a Public Presence

There has been continued discussion within Belmont of a relocation or consolidation of city administrative offices. Currently, City Hall and the main administrative offices are located on Fifth Avenue at Broadway; the Police Department and Parks and Leisure Services Departments are located in Twin Pines Park west of Sixth Avenue, and outside of the Downtown Planning Area; and the Engineering and Public Works Offices are on Sem Lane east of U.S. 101, considerably outside the Downtown. The City Hall and other public agency offices are an integral component in downtown land use, and while consolidation is desirable, a continued public presence within the Downtown should be maintained.

5.2.2 Balancing Future Growth Against the Capacity of the Roadway Infrastructure

The Ralston Avenue and El Camino Real Roadways function as important corridors for the movement of traffic on a regional scale by linking to major highways and adjacent communities, as well on a local scale by providing access and circulation to downtown land uses. As more thoroughly described within the Transportation Element of this Plan, each of these corridors are currently operating at levels which exceed their designed capacity. Clearly, continued growth within the entire region will exacerbate this problem on the regional scale, driving the need for